

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 23 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please amend claims 1, 22, 24 and 33 as follows. A copy of all pending claims follows with each claim including a status identifier pursuant to the proposed revisions to 37 CFR 1.121:

1. (Currently Amended) A former for producing a tissue web, comprising:
 - a forming element comprising a forming roll, an inner dewatering belt, and an outer dewatering belt;
 - the inner and outer belts converging to form a stock inlet nip;
 - at least one of the inner and outer belts being a dewatering belt having zonally variable wire permeability;
 - the inner and outer belts being guided by the forming roll and thereafter separating from one another in the area of a separation point;
 - at least one suction element positioned adjacent the inner belt on a side which is opposite the outer belt; and
 - the at least one suction element being positioned at least one of:

within the forming roll; and
adjacent the area of the separation point,
wherein the inner and outer belts separate from each other immediately following the forming roll.

2. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein at least the outer belt is a dewatering wire having zonally variable wire permeability.

3. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the tissue web is separated from the outer belt in the area of the separation point.

4. (Original) The former of claim 3, wherein the tissue web is retained by the inner wire after being separated from the outer belt.

5. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein at least one of the inner and outer belts comprises a circulating continuous dewatering belt.

6. (Previously Canceled).

7. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein each of the inner and outer belts is a circulating continuous dewatering wire having zonally variable wire permeability.

8. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the inner belt contacts the forming element and the outer belt is guided with the inner belt around the forming element such that the outer belt does not come into contact with the forming element.

9. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the forming element comprises the at least one suction element.

10. (Original) The former of claim 9, wherein the forming element comprises a suction zone.

11. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the at least one suction element is positioned adjacent the area of the separation point.

12. (Original) The former of claim 11, wherein the at least one suction element is provided inside a loop of the inner belt.

13. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the at least one suction element comprises a vacuum suction element and wherein the vacuum present inside the suction element is adjustable.
14. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the at least one suction element is positioned in front of the separation point, in a web travel direction.
15. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the at least one suction element causes the inner belt to separate from the outer belt.
16. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the at least one suction element is arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the inner belt and the tissue web.
17. (Original) The former of claim 1, further comprising at least one blowing element positioned adjacent the outer belt on a side which is opposite the inner belt.
18. (Original) The former of claim 17, wherein the at least one blowing element is located in the area of the separation point.

19. (Original) The former of claim 17, wherein the at least one blowing element is located in the area of the separation point and inside a loop of the outer belt.

20. (Original) The former of claim 17, wherein the at least one blowing element is arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the outer belt and the tissue web.

21. (Original) The former of claim 1, wherein the forming element comprises a suction zone having adjustable vacuum.

22. (Currently Amended) A former for producing a tissue web, comprising:
a forming element comprising a forming roll, an inner dewatering belt, and an outer dewatering belt;

the inner and outer belts converging to form a stock inlet nip;

at least one of the inner and outer belts being a dewatering belt having zonally variable wire permeability;

the inner and outer belts being guided by the forming roll and thereafter separating from one another in the area of a separation point;

a conditioning device positioned adjacent the outer belt; and

at least one suction element being positioned at least one of:

within the forming roll; and
adjacent the area of the separation point,
wherein the inner and outer belts separate from each other immediately following the forming roll.

23. (Canceled).

24. (Currently Amended) The former of claim 22, ~~further comprising wherein the at least one suction element is positioned adjacent the inner belt on a side which is opposite the outer belt.~~

25. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein the tissue web is separated from the outer belt in the area of the separation point.

26. (Original) The former of claim 25, wherein the tissue web is retained by the inner wire after being separated from the outer belt.

27. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein at least one of the inner and outer belts comprises a circulating continuous dewatering belt.

28. (Previously Canceled).

29. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein each of the inner and outer belts is a circulating continuous dewatering wire having zonally variable wire permeability.

30. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein the inner belt contacts the forming element and the outer belt is guided with the inner belt around the forming element such that the outer belt does not come into contact with the forming element.

31. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein the forming element comprises the at least one suction element.

32. (Original) The former of claim 31, wherein the forming element comprises a suction zone.

33. (Currently Amended) The former of claim 22, ~~further comprising wherein the~~ at least one suction element is positioned adjacent the area of the separation point.

34. (Original) The former of claim 33, wherein the at least one suction element is

provided inside a loop of the inner belt.

35. (Original) The former of claim 33, wherein the at least one suction element comprises a vacuum suction element and wherein the vacuum present inside the suction element is adjustable.

36. (Original) The former of claim 33, wherein the at least one suction element is positioned in front of the separation point, in a web travel direction.

37. (Original) The former of claim 33, wherein the at least one suction element causes the inner belt to separate from the outer belt.

38. (Original) The former of claim 33, wherein the at least one suction element is arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the inner belt and the tissue web.

39. (Original) The former of claim 22, further comprising at least one blowing element positioned adjacent the outer belt on a side which is opposite the inner belt.

40. (Original) The former of claim 39, wherein the at least one blowing element is

located in the area of the separation point.

41. (Original) The former of claim 39, wherein the at least one blowing element is located in the area of the separation point and inside a loop of the outer belt.

42. (Original) The former of claim 39, wherein the at least one blowing element is arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the outer belt and the tissue web.

43. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein the forming element comprises a suction zone having adjustable vacuum.

44. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein the conditioning device comprises a wire cleaning device.

45. (Original) The former of claim 44, wherein the conditioning device is arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the outer belt and the tissue web.

46. (Original) The former of claim 44, wherein the inner belt is a felt belt.

47. (Original) The former of claim 22, wherein the former is a crescent former.

48. (Withdrawn) A process for producing a tissue web in a former which includes a forming element, an inner dewatering belt, and an outer dewatering belt, the inner and outer belts converging to form a stock inlet nip, the inner and outer belts being guided over the forming element and thereafter separating from one another in the area of a separation point, and at least one suction element positioned adjacent the inner belt on a side which is opposite the outer belt, the process comprising:

forming the tissue web in the area of the forming element;

guiding the inner and outer belts around the forming element; and

separating the inner and outer belts in the area of the separation point.

49. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 48, wherein the separating comprises separating the outer belt from the inner belt.

50. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 48, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt via the at least one suction element which is positioned inside a loop.

51. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 48, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt via the forming element, the forming element comprising the at least one suction element having a suction zone.

52. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 48, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt in front of the separation point, in the web travel direction.

53. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 48, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt via the at least one suction element arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the tissue web and the inner belt.

54. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 48, further comprising blowing a medium against the outer belt using a blowing element positioned adjacent the outer belt in the area of the separation point.

55. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 54, wherein the blowing comprises blowing a medium against the outer belt via the at least one blowing element arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the tissue web and the outer belt.

56. (Withdrawn) A process for producing a tissue web in a former which includes a forming element, an inner dewatering belt, and an outer dewatering belt, the inner and outer belts converging to form a stock inlet nip, the inner and outer belts being guided over the forming element and thereafter separating from one another in the area of a separation point, and a conditioning device positioned adjacent the outer belt, the process comprising:

forming the tissue web in the area of the forming element;

guiding the inner and outer belts around the forming element; and

conditioning the outer belt.

57. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 56, further comprising separating the inner and outer belts in the area of the separation point.

58. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 57, wherein the separating comprises separating the outer belt from the inner belt.

59. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 57, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt via at least one suction element which is positioned inside a loop.

60. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 57, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt via the forming element, the forming element comprising the at least one suction element having a suction zone.

61. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 57, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt in front of the separation point, in the web travel direction.

62. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 57, wherein the separating comprises suctioning the inner belt via the at least one suction element arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the tissue web and the inner belt.

63. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 56, further comprising blowing a medium against the outer belt using a blowing element positioned adjacent the outer belt in the area of the separation point.

64. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 63, wherein the blowing comprises blowing a medium against the outer belt via the at least one blowing element arranged at least essentially over an entire width of one of the tissue web and the outer belt.

65. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 64, wherein the blowing element is positioned inside a loop of the outer belt in the area of the separation point.

66. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 56, wherein the former comprises a crescent former in which the inner belt is a felt belt.

67. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 56, wherein at least the outer belt is a dewatering wire having zonally variable wire permeability.

68. (Previously Amended) A former for producing a tissue web, comprising:
a forming roll, an inner continuous dewatering belt, and an outer continuous dewatering belt;
the inner and outer belts converging to form a stock inlet nip;
a headbox positioned adjacent the stock inlet nip;
each of the inner and outer belts forming corresponding inner and outer continuous loops which are each guided over a plurality of guide rolls;
each of the inner and outer belts being guided over the forming roll and thereafter separating from one another in the area of a separation point located immediately following the forming roll; and

at least one of:

at least one suction element positioned inside the inner loop and adjacent the inner belt on a side which is opposite the outer belt; and

a conditioning device positioned adjacent the outer belt so as to clean the outer belt, wherein at least one of the inner and the outer belts is a dewatering wire having zonally variable wire permeability.

69. (Original) The former of claim 68, further comprising:

a press nip through which the tissue web and the inner belt is guided, the press nip being formed between a cylinder and shoe press roll,

wherein the tissue web is removed from the inner belt after passing through the press nip.

70. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 54, wherein the blowing element is positioned inside a loop of the outer belt in the area of the separation point.